AN EPISTLE TO FRIENDS,

Shewing the great Difference

BETWEEN A

Convinced Estate

AND A

Converted Estate;

And between the *PROFESSION* of the *TRUTH*, and the *POSSESSION* thereof;

With the Comfort and *S*weetneſs to the *SOUL* it Affordeth.

With a Few Words of Good Counſel and Wholeſome Advice both to PARENTS and their CHILDREN.

By one that Travels for Sion's *Proſperity, known by the Name of*

John Banks.

London, Printed and ſold by *T. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court* in *Grace-Church-ſtreet*, 1696.

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By one that Travels for Sion's Prosperity, knowing the Name of

John Bayly.

An EPISTLE *to* Friends, *ſhewing the great Difference between a* Convinced Eſtate, *and a* Converted Eſtate; *And between the* Profeſſion *of the Truth, and the* Poſſeſſion *thereof, with the Comfort and Sweetneſs to the Soul it Affordeth,* &c.

SInce the Dawning of the Heavenly Day and Living Appearance of the pure God, and Riſing of his Glorious Son by his Light, Grace and *Holy Spirit*, many have been called and *Convinced* of the Truth and way of God, what it is, and how they might walk therein: This Knowledge hath been given to *many*, of God in and through *Jeſus Chriſt*, his Son, by his Light, Grace and Holy Spirit, put and placed in the Hearts and Conſciences of the Sons and Daughters of Men.

Now that which the Lord requires thereby, is *Obedience* and *Faithfulneſs* thereunto, according to the Knowledge ſo given, which is to *deny Self*, and take up and willingly bear the *Croſs* of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, which Crucifies to the World, and the World to them, with all its vile Affections and Luſts; theſe come to know not only a *Convinced Eſtate*, but a *Converſion* in their Hearts and Souls.

Now the *Counſel* of *God*, that in my Heart and Soul remains, in Bowels of true Love, Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, and as a *Faithful Warning* alſo unto all ſuch, who have remained (whether many Years, or few) under a *Convincement*, or in a *Convinced Eſtate*; is, *That* you carfully and in true fear *yield pure Obedience unto God, according to the Knowledge he hath given you* by his pure *Light*, *Grace* and *Holy Spirit*; being no Sacrifice ſhort of this, doth find acceptance with him; who by the ſame lets you ſee, and accordingly teaches you, *what* you ſhall *deny your ſelves in*: What you muſt part with and forſake? What you ſhould do, and what you ſhould not, in order to your *Converſion*, and *Satisfaction*.

I ſay, as having a ſtreſs upon my Spirit, in the Love of God unto all you, as before; *Yield Obedience unto God according to the Knowledge you have received from him*, and do no longer ſatisfie your ſelves, nor ſpeak Peace to your ſelves, becauſe you are *Convinced* of the *Truth*, and becauſe you know the *Truth* and *Way* of *God*, what it is, and ſo make a *Profeſſion* thereof; think not that this *Knowledge* will ſerve your turn to

juſtifie you in the ſight of God, ſhort of *Obedience*. For *Heb.* 5. 8. Chriſt himſelf, though he was the Son of God, he learned *Obedience*; and how much more ought the Sons and Daughters of Men learn *Obedience*, though never ſo Rich, Wiſe, Great, and Potent in the World, or never ſo much accounted of among the Sons and Daughters of Men: that ſo through *Obedience* to the known Will and Requirings of God, you may come to feel and be ſenſible of the work of his Power and Holy Spirit in your Hearts, there to change you, to work, and *Convert* you into the Nature of Truth, to the bearing of the Heavenly Image thereof: The working of which, as it's truly waited for and kept to, (*viz.*) the Power begets fear towards God, leaſt ſuch ſhould diſobey him, or grieve his good Spirit; and ſo effects Brokenneſs and Tenderneſs of Heart and Spirit before the Lord, and works into lowlineſs of Mind, in Carriage and Behaviour before all People; ſoftens the hard Heart, brings down the High Mind, and Proud and Lofty Spirit, and ſubjects the Stiff and Unruly Will and Nature. And they who come to know this work wrought in them, in order to their *Converſion*, come to know it in and under, and after their being ſo *Convinced*, they muſt, and do come to know it through *Judgment*, which they muſt love, and patiently dwell in, if ever they come to know a *Converted Eſtate*. Though the ſame (to wit *Judgment*) be ſet up and kindled in their *Hearts* as *Fire*, and know the Word of God as a Sword and Hammer; yet notwithſtanding it muſt be loved: For ſo ſaid the Prophet; *How do I love thy Judgment!* And Chriſt ſaid, *I will not break the bruiſed Reed, nor quench the ſmoaking Flax*, until *Judgment* be brought forth unto *Victory*.

So have a care (all, who are *Convinced*, and do make a *Confeſſion* too, and *Profeſſion* of the Truth) of preſuming upon the Mercies of the Lord in your *Diſobedience*, and flying *Judgment*; or that which *Judgeth* you becauſe of your *Diſobedience*, and flying the Croſs.

For *Judgment*, you muſt either know and love, and patiently dwell in and keep to, or elſe your hard Hearts you can never know *Converted* and *Changed*; and the Word of God as a *ſharp two edged Sword*, that will cauſe pain in your Bowels, and beget Godly ſorrow in you to bring you to true *Repentance*, by weeping and mourning for your *Diſobedience*, you muſt either know and love, or elſe the *Firſt-born* in you can never come to be *ſlain*, which is that Life in that Nature, that you have lived after the Fleſh in doing and having your own Wills, in fulfilling your own Hearts Luſts; and the Word of God as a *Fire*, you muſt either know and love, and patiently dwell in, and Judgment to be ſet up and executed in your Hearts, or elſe you can never know the *Combuſtible matter* there *Conſumed*; the *Bryars* and the *Thorns*, the *Love* of the *World*, the *Luſt* of the *Fleſh*, the *Luſt* of the *Eye*, the *Pride* of *Life*, the *Cares* of the *World* which is ſaid to *Choak* the good Seed, as to the

the coming of it up in its Growth, in the Hearts of People. I thus ſet forth unto you, that the way of your Redemption out of Captivity and Spiritual Bondage, and to come to a *Converted Eſtate*, muſt be in and through *Judgment*, and that as by a *Fire* and *Hammer*, or *Sword*, think it not hard; for it's the right Door to come in by to receive *Mercy* from the Lord's Hand; of whom it's ſaid, *He mixes Mercy with Judgment*, (but then the *Judgment* muſt be owned.) And though many are they in number, that are living Witneſſes, this has been the Way of the dealings of God with their Souls; and it was to them and to you in the Offers of it, *God's free Love*: in and through *Jeſus Chriſt* his Son, who ſaid, *For Judgment I am come into World*; and all *Judgment* is committed unto him. John 5. 22.

So now all ye, who remain in a *Convinced Eſtate*, and live and act contrary to that which Convinceth you, ye ſhould not there remain in Diſobedience: for ye may ſee (if ye will but turn to your Minds in fear towards God) the great difference between a *Convinced Eſtate*, and a *Converted Eſtate*. For the Hearts, Souls and Spirits of thoſe that are turn'd to God in Righteouſneſs, and ſo truly *Converted* and changed, and have known a paſſing from Death unto Life, the way I have ſhewed you, they are *Broken-hearted*, *Lowly-Minded*, and in their Souls and Spirits there remains a true Tenderneſs; and ſuch as are concerned to ſet a Watch before their Lips daily, that they may not offend with their Tongues! And not only in *Words* but in *Actions*; and that they may live the life of Truth they make Profeſſion of. And it's ſuch that grow in Grace and Saving Knowledge, and that proſper in their *Gifts* given unto them of the *Free-Giver* (who fear him always) and that to his Praiſe and Glory, and their remaining Comfort and Souls ſweet Satisfaction.

And therefore is it, that the Hearts of the *truly Converted*, are fitted and prepared by the Power of God to *offer Offerings* and *Sacrifices* unto him, that find acceptance with him.

But the Hearts of the *Convinced*. that live in *Diſobedience*, and are not willing to bear the daily Croſs, nor come under Judgment, are not ſo, but are hard; and their Minds high, not Subject to the Yoke of Chriſt, nor willing to bear his burthen; and yet can ſatisfie your ſelves in *coming as the People come, and ſit as God's People ſit* in their Meetings and Aſſemblies, and *like to hear thy Words* (as the Lord ſaid by the Prophet) *but will not do them; and thou art unto them*, ſaith the Lord, *as a lovely Song, as one that hath a pleaſant Voice, and can play well upon an Inſtrument; and they ſhew forth much love with their Mouths; but their hearts go after their Covetouſneſs.* Ezek. 33. 31. Therefore let theſe things be as Warnings unto you, all that only remain in a *Convinced Eſtate*, and bare *Profeſſion* of the Truth, ſhort of the *Poſſeſſion* thereof: and take warning betimes, receive Counſel and

give

give ear to Inſtruction, and own Reproof, for its the
Prov. 6. 32. way of Life, before Death ſeize upon you, that will
cap. 15. 10. ſtay no Man or Womans time nor leiſure to Repent, and Amend their ways and doings; leſt that day and hour come upon you, as a *Thief in the night*, that you, like the fooliſh Virgins, are not aware of. And then you finding your ſelves not fitted and prepared to go hence, be made to cry upon your *Death-Beds*, when *time* that you had, is ſpent (in forgetfulneſs of God, and the many warnings you have had) *Lord, open to us!* But if you put off the day and time of the amendment of your ways and doings until then, you know aforehand, what will be the Anſwer you muſt
Matth. 25. 10, 11, 12. have given you: Firſt, *The Door of Mercy will be ſhut* againſt you, that have not loved *Judgment* in your life time; and the Anſwer will be, *Depart from me, I know you not.*

I Called and Cried, but ye would not hear; and therefore you ſhall Call and Cry, but I will not Anſwer. Oh! How long has the Lord Called and Cried, and Knockt at the Door of your Hearts, and ſtriven with you by his good Spirit, as by an Immediate Hand, who would often thereby have retained you from your back-ſlidings and unfaithfulneſs, and diſobedience? who hath not been ſevere in marking what you have done amiſs, and therefore you have preſumed upon his Patience and long-ſuffering (*Do ſo no more*, that's Chriſt's Leſſon) and ſometimes when, becauſe of the Long-ſuffering of God to you ward, it hath entered your Hearts to conſider, how juſt it might have been with him, to have *Cut you off* long ere now in his wrath for your *Diſobedience!* No doubt, but ſometimes you have made *Vows* and *Promiſes* in your ſelves, you would do ſo no more, as heretofore you had done: And after all this, for want of watchfulneſs over the outgoings of your Minds, and for want of taking true heed unto the ſhinings of the pure *Light* of *Jeſus Chriſt* that diſcovered your State and Condition to you, as it was, and for want of keeping the fear of the Lord before your Eyes, the Enemies of your Souls with his old Baits, in the fair proffers of them, you have again enter'd his Temptation, and ſo have ſinned and rebelled againſt, and contrary to the ſtriving of his good Spirit, the Spirit of *Truth*, and contrary to his pure Counſel, the Light, wherein the true Power is received to *reſiſt the wicked one* in
John 3. 19. all his Devices, who believe therein, and keep thereto: Which pure Light will for ever be the *Condemnation* of thoſe that do not love it, and that are not willing to bring their deeds to it, that they may be manifeſt whether
John 3. 21. they are wrought in God or no; for all the Children of the *Light* and of the *Day* bring their *Deeds* to it.

And beſides the many *Viſitations* of *Gods Love* to you by an Immediate Hand, by the Strivings of his good Spirit in your Hearts, or at the Door of your Hearts; O the *Labour*, *Travel* and *Exerciſe* of God's *Servants*, *Miniſters* and *Meſſengers*, with which they have been attended, and weightily concerned, many times both in *Body* and *Spirit*, in their Teſtimonies, in Love, good Will and true Tenderneſs, for the good of your Immortal Souls. And yet notwithſtanding the Lord's great and large Love to you; *Firſt*, in calling you by his Grace out of the World, and the ways and dead Worſhips and Forms of it, and in it, and his giving you a Knowledge of his Will and Mind thereby, that you might learn Obedience accordingly; and notwithſtanding the Striving of his Holy Spirit in order to bring you thereunto; *together* with the great Labour, Travel and Pains, that the Servants of Chriſt have been willing to take, and Travel many Hundreds of Miles over *Sea*, and Land, through Difficulties and various Exerciſes, willingly leaving behind them whatſoever is near and dear unto them, or never ſo good and lawful in its ſelf, for the good of your Souls, with the reſt of God's People, yea, in love to all People; in and through all which the *Love* of *God* has been and is largely held forth unto you. And yet notwithſtanding all this, and much more that might be mentioned, hath it not proved the unhappineſs of too many of you *Profeſſing* the *Truth*, that are not come to *poſſeſs* the ſame, becauſe of your unfaithfulneſs, that you have requited both the Lord and his Servants *Evil* for *Good*, and have choſen your own way, and followed the Counſel of your own Hearts Lufts, being *unconverted*, and ſpoken Peace to your ſelves in a polluted Reſt? And are not ſome of you too much like thoſe the Lord ſpeaks of by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, when he ſaid, *Son of Man, the Children of thy People are ſtill talking againſt thee by the Walls and in the Doors, ſaying one to another, and every Man to his Brother, I pray you, let us hear the Word that cometh forth from the Mouth of the Lord:* Which although, as I have hinted, they *confeſſed* unto, and ſeemingly liked to hear, yet they were not willing to do accordingly. *And when this cometh to paſs (and it will, ſaith the Lord) they ſhall know there hath been a Prophet among them.*

Methinks it ſounds in my Ears, as though they ſpake mockingly, or in deriſion, ſcorn or diſlike againſt the Prophet; and it were well if this proved not the Eſtate and Condition of too many *Profeſſing Truth* in our day! But I fear, and have a Godly Jealouſie, and have ſeen and felt too much of it, in my Travels and various Exerciſes, that there are too many that undervalue and diſ-eſteem the *Labour* and *Travel* of *God's Servants*, *Miniſters* and *Meſſengers*; yea, the very Ancient and Elder Brethen, as well as the Younger, except they appear as thoſe that are very Wiſe and Eloquent (tho' in the Life and Power) and by

a proud disdainful, Lordly Spirit, that is of an Earthly Savour, are often busying themselves, and *whispering*, and *tatling* and *talking* against *Faithful Brethren*, that have born the Burthen in the *Heat* of the *Day*. And if you can but espy any Failure or Weakness (as you think) in or by any of them, tho' but one of a Thousand, as to what you will take Liberties to your selves to do, and yet justifie your selves therein, tho' readily *Judge* and *Condemn* them. Do not you think thereby to cover your Iniquity and Disobedience: For I must tell you in Love and true Tenderness, you will find your selves greatly mistaken and deceived by the *Enemy* of your *Souls*; who through his Subtilty persuades you to believe his *Lyes*, and that in the day and time of your Account: For according to the Deeds done in your own Bodies, or by your selves, so must your Reward be, whether they be good or evil.

Why *talked* the People *that sat as Gods People did*, against the Prophet in his time? Was it for any other thing than *speaking the Words of the Lord*? What do some in our day speak and talk one to another against the Servants of Christ for, as though (in their account) if every one appears not in their Testimony as an Eye or a Hand, they must have no place in the Work of God; but are cut off and thrown away, in their Judgment? Is it now any more than in the Prophets time? Is it for any thing else, but because those that have the *Word* now, must speak it in Faithfulness unto all that such is spoken against? *Galat.* 4. 16. And are they counted Enemies therefore by some? As *Paul* said, that blessed Apostle, in his time. Oh! When will your Minds change! When will your Hearts be rent and tender'd to the humbling of you under the Consideration of these things! And not so to abuse your own Mercies, or the Mercies and large Loving Kindnesses of the Lord thus held forth and continued unto you! Why is *Wit*, why is *Wisdom* in the Man's part, *Wealth* and *Strength* of Man's *Reason* so much accounted of, and such so esteemed, and others more simple undervalued? And why is the *Simplicity* of the *Gospel* so trodden down and run over by too many in the overlineſs? Do not you see, and will you not consider, how the Lord has and will *confound the wisdom of the Wise, and bring to nothing the Understanding of the Prudent ones*, who exalt themselves thereby? For he giveth more Grace to the Humble, and will exalt the Man of low degree; and such shall be abased.

The blessed Apostle came not with *enticing Words of Mens Wisdom*, neither the words that *Mens Wisdom* teacheth; but in the Demonstration of the Power and Spirit of God: So they that exalt themselves, though never so *high* in *words*, *Excellent Speeches*, and *Scholastick Terms*, and though they be never so much cried up, the Lord will, as he has done, *cast down* such; as by woful Experience too much it is to be seen by those that by a *light airy Spirit*, notwithstanding their words, have floated above the pure simplicity of the Gospel. So all keep low, and there is safety.

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What do ſome under a *Profeſſion* of the Truth, though out of the *Poſſeſſion* thereof, and Life and Practice of the ſame, think themſelves ſo ſecure, that becauſe of *Eaſe*, *Peace* and *Liberty* (though but outward) have and do ſo continue, there is no ſuch need of Diligence and Faithfulneſs towards God; and as though it were afforded that they might ſeek themſelves, and ſerve themſelves, and make uſe of their time to grow *Rich* and *Great* in the World, and as though this *Day* would ſtill laſt to ſuch unfaithful ones: Oh, I tell you *Nay*, you deceive your ſelves therein: For God hath determined to Viſit this Nation, and the People thereof as by a *Rod* and a *Scourge*, becauſe of the Sins and Abominations thereof: For his Soul is v xed, and his Holy Spirit is grieved even into Wrath and ſore Diſpleaſure.

And you that make a *Profeſſion* of his Name, and not in Truth and Righteouſneſs, who ſow to the Fleſh and not unto the Spirit, do not think to eſcape the *Judgment* without a timely Repentance: for you are neither one with that of God in your ſelves, nor in Unity with his People; and in the Execution of his Righteous Judgments upon this Nation, you will be found in the *Outer Court*, to be trodden under the foot of the *Gentiles*. And yet notwithſtanding, whatſoever the Lord ſees good to bring to paſs in the Earth, as he always had, he hath ſtill a way and place to *preſerve his faithful Ones*, as in a City within the Gate, within the Door, whoſe Walls is Salvation, or as thoſe that know *Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks*. So ſtay not behind in *careleſneſs*, neither abide any longer in the *Outer Court*; though ſeemingly you may enjoy *Eaſe*, *Peace* and *Fulneſs* for a time, *Trouble* and *Perplexity* will overtake all ſuch. So make good uſe of the time, the Lord in Love and Mercy may yet afford you, and ſtrive with diligence and fear to get within the *Walls* into the *Inner Court*, that is, into the Life, into the Power, into the *Poſſeſſion* of the *Truth*, you make *Profeſſion* of, or elſe you will be left behind, liable to be *deſtroyed by the Deſtroyer, and devoured by the Devourer*. Then you ſhall remember, that I with many of God's faithful Servants, have given you a faithful Friendly Warning. *Rom.* 1. 18. *Revel.* 11. 2.

Now through all theſe things you may ſee, that are ſerious and conſiderate, the great and vaſt Difference between a *Convinced Eſtate* and a *Converted Eſtate*, and between the *Profeſſion* barely, and the *Profeſſor* thereof. For the *Profeſſor* of the Truth in words, out of the Life and Practice, is dry, barren and empty, and unſenſible of Life in their Souls, out of the *Faith* that gives *Victory*; *Wells without Water*, *Clouds without Rain*, minding Earthly things more than Heavenly; *Reprobate Silver* ſhall Men call them, who becauſe of their extraordinary love to, and gaping after the World in too much love thereunto, more than unto God, his Truth and People, or for the good of their own

Souls. For if some that profess the Truth, were but as much concerned in faithfulness to God, and for the good of their own Souls, in order to win Heaven and the Salvation thereof, as they are concerned for the Earth, and to heap up Riches they know not for whom, well might it be with many as to their Eternal Happiness.

But being that such are many times more concerned for the Assurance of the *Terrestial*, than the *Celestial* (viz.) more for the *Earthly* than the *Heavenly*; hence it is, that although such profess the Truth and the Worship of God amongst his People, they grow very indifferent about the performance of it: for they can scarce find any time to come to *Meetings*, but on the *First Day*. What differ these from the *Professor* and *Prophane* in the World? Let such say so to themselves, and amend their ways and doings. And when such do come to *Meetings*, its too apparent where their *Treasure* is, and their *Hearts* are with it, *to wit*, in the *Earth*: And so their Minds and Heads are pull'd downward, by reason of the weight of it upon them. And hence it is, that such are *Dead*, *Dry*, *Sottish*, *Careless* and *Sleepy* in *Meetings*, which sheweth forth the coldness of their Love to God-ward, his Truth and People, and worthy Name of the Lord; and how unconcerned they are for the Management of the Affairs and Concerns of Truth in *Mens* and *Womens Meetings*, and neglect *Week-day Meetings*. And yet none readier than such to Judge and Censure those that are Faithful, Diligent and Laborious, and wholly Devoted, what in them lies, to serve the Lord, his Truth and People, both in managing and maintaining the Affairs and Concerns of Truth. This is the Trick of all *Idlers*, that would *Eat*, but will not work themselves, to *Judge and find many Faults* with them that are diligent in their Labour and Concern; which maketh the Labour and Travel of God's Faithful Servants, that have his Work to do, and his Word to speak, sometimes hard and uneasie, because often the Work is great, and the Labourers but few: So it must needs lie heavy upon some, though Censoriously judged for their Pains. Howbeit, notwithstanding some in our day, as the Prophet in his time, *Labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought*, as to effect good to the unconcerned; yet their Peace is with the Lord, and their Reward cometh from him; Praises, pure Honour and Glory be given to his Holy Name and Great Power for evermore, saith my Soul, who will not have any to shut a Door in his House for nought.

Prov. 6. *v.* 6. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. *Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise, thou sleepy lazy one:* For though she hath no Guides, Overseer nor Ruler, that thou professest to have, that professest the Truth, and yet out of the *Possession*; for yet she, the poor *Ant, provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard! When wilt thou rise from thy sleep! thinkest thou? What, yet more sleep, and*

yet more ſlumber? And yet more folding of thy hands together? So ſhall thy Poverty come upon thee, as one that Travelleth, and thy Want as an Armed Man.

Wherefore there is a Cry in the ſecret of my Soul unto all you *Profeſſors* of Truth, that are not yet come into the *Poſſeſſion* thereof, to *come away:* Ariſe, and ſtand up upon your Feet, both Man and Woman, and ſhake your ſelves from the Duſt of the Earth: For Duſt is a ſtifling and choaking thing; why are you ſo willing to *Travel* with ſuch a burthen upon your Heart and Mind, as the Earth is? By reaſon of which the juſt pure Seed of God is oppreſſed in you, which cauſeth you to Groan in your *Travel:* Wherefore the time of *Meeting*, and when you ſhould wait upon, worſhip and ſerve God, it's weariſome and tedious unto you. Oh! Come away, come away, all you that make *Profeſſion* of the Truth, and yet feel not of the Sweetneſs and Comfort that it affords to the Souls of thoſe that are in the *Poſſeſſion*, and live the life thereof: Come away, eſcape for your lives *to Zoar*, the City of Safety, and look not back into *Sodom* again: Remember *Lot*'s Wife: And once at laſt, quit your ſelves like *Men* and *Women* for God, and not only like, but really ſo: And freely and willingly part with, forſake, and caſt off all thoſe many things that have been ſo glued to your Minds, or your Minds to them; that have been as ſo many *Lovers* hugged in your Boſoms, all which is but as an *Harlot* you are joined unto: ſo your ſerving and *Profeſſion* has been and is in the Fleſh, where you cannot pleaſe God. Caſt off all theſe *letting*, *cumbring things*, that you have too long ſo much loved, by which the Enemy of your Souls hath lulled you aſleep, that have hindred you from embracing of the Love of God in your Hearts, in and through Jeſus Chriſt his Son; that room there, and openneſs there (inſtead of ſtraitneſs and cloſeneſs) may be. For the Appearance of God's Son in his Glorious Riſing and Living Appearance, by his pure *Light*, teaching *Grace* and *Holy Spirit*; that will not only ſhine to let you ſee, and teach you what you ſhall deny your ſelves in and of, but what manner of Lives you muſt live: And not only ſo, but as you believe and wait upon God therein, Power you ſhall receive, whereby you may be enabled to anſwer and perform the ſame; that inſtead of a bare *Profeſſion*, you may come to know the *Poſſeſſion* of Life and Power, true Peace, Sweetneſs and Comfort in your Hearts and Souls, and inſtead of weariſomneſs and irkſomeneſs in the time of Meeting among God's People, you may come to have a true Delight in the Joy of God's Salvation, in waiting upon (though in Silence) and worſhipping and ſerving of God in Spirit and Truth, as all the Faithful have, that are in the *Poſſeſſion* of that they make *Profeſſion* of; and that inſtead of Deadneſs, Dulneſs, Sleepineſs and Unconcernedneſs in *Meetings*, and Converſation too, you may come

Luke 17. 32

through Faithfulneſs and true Obedience, in a ſelf-denial and bearing the daily Croſs, to feel a change wrought in your Hearts through the Power that is of God, in and through the Execution of the Righteous Judgment, and ſo come to be quickned and enlivened by the Quickning Spirit of the *Second Adam*, the *Lord* from *Heaven*; and ſo come to have a living concern to attend your Hearts and Minds both in *Meeting* and *Converſation*; as all that live the life of Truth they make *Profeſſion* of, are attended with; which makes them to ſay, becauſe of the Sweetneſs and Comfort their Souls are in a *Poſſeſſion* of, that is as a ſtream from a Fountain, or a living ſpring from a Well, even the Fountain and Well of Life; Oh, Truth is precious unto me! I would ſell or part with any thing that I have, that is to be parted with, that I might purchaſe more of the fulneſs of it: But I would not ſell it for all the World, nor no Enjoyment that is in it, neither a *Wife*, nor an *Husband*, nor any *Poſſeſſion* or Enjoyment here below, though never ſo great, fair or promiſing. For ſuch ſay in their Hearts, that commends them to God, *My beloved* (to wit, the *Truth*) *is mine, and I am his*, the faireſt and chiefeſt unto me of *Ten Thouſand*; and ſuch it is in their Heavenly and Spiritual Exerciſe, that ſit where the *Spouſe* of old did, which is under his Shadow, and that with great delight, and his Fruit is ſweet unto their Taſte.

And theſe are they, that above all things *Truth* is precious unto, that feel, partake, poſſeſs and enjoy of the ſweetneſs and precioufneſs thereof in their Hearts and Souls, as I even at this moment of time, with all the truly Faithful and Obedient do; to the Praiſe and Glory of the moſt High God be it ſpoken. Wherefore my Heart and Soul is broken and melted into true Tendetneſs before him, which makes me to ſay again in anſwer to that weighty Concern, that ſeized upon my Spirit as I waiting upon the Lord in my own Dwelling-Houſe (when ſuch weakneſs of Body attended me, that I was not able to go to a Meeting) to write on this wiſe, for the good of all I am thus concerned for, in this my Epiſtle; Oh, the great difference between a *Convinced Eſtate*, and a *Converted Eſtate!* Between the *Profeſſion* of the Truth, and the *Poſſeſſion* thereof; and that chiefly, becauſe of the Sweetneſs and Comfort it affordeth unto the Souls of the Faithful. So that I was truly willing, in obedience to the bleſſed Requirings of the Lord my God, on this wiſe to diſcharge my Conſcience, and eaſe my Spirit in anſwer unto the Movings and Motion of his Pure, Holy, Living Spirit, that (bleſſed be his Holy Name for evermore) he hath made me, with a large Remnant, livingly ſenſible of, deſiring and heartily wiſhing, that my Endeavours hereby may be truly Effectual for the good of all that may be concerned in this my Teſtimony.

And now *Friends*, unto you that are *Parents*, and that have *Children*, I have ſomething to ſay both to *you*, and your *Children*.

And

And in the first place, the Concern that is upon my Mind, and hath often and long remained, is to give you to understand a little of my own Experience and Concern in *Ordering* and *Training* up of my own *Children*, that if happily it may tend to stir up those, or such as may be short in their *Duty* towards their *Children*.

When it pleased the Lord to give me *Children*, as Mercies from his Hand (amongst many more I have received from him) as my *Children* grew up, a Concern many times, very weighty (the Lord knows) seized upon my Mind, both upon my Bed, and many other times, what way I might betake my self to Train up my *Children*, as did become the Truth, and that might become a Blessing to them, and a Comfort to us their *Parents*. And accordingly I saw it my way, as much as in me lay, that as they grew up in years, to mind and take diligent notice of their *Natural Inclination*, or what it was they most *Naturally Inclined* unto: And when I saw any one of them to *Incline* to any thing in *Word* or *Action*, that under a serious Consideration was not like to prove, if it was suffered to grow or increase, either to be good for their *Soul* or *Body* (for that which is not good for the *Soul*, it cannot be good for the *Body*) it greatly became my Concern to restrain them from that when it was but little and small, and when they were *young*; so that it was both easie for me to do, and them to get over. And when I found any thing of *stubbornness* get up in them, contrary to the Counsel and Advice I had given them, I did not let *foolish pity* prevent due *Admonition* and *Correction*, though I dearly and tenderly did and do *love* them all.

But some spoil their *Children*, in letting them have their *Wills* so much, that they become Disobedient and Rebellious, and so give away their Power so much to the *Will* of the *Child*, and lessen their Authority: That as sometimes I have heard, to the grief my Soul, *Parents* say to their *Children*, Do such a thing; they have replied (*I will not*) and whether ought the *Child*, that doth not yet understand what's good either for its *Soul* or *Body*, to have its *Will*? Or ought not the *Parents* rather to Constrain them to do what they know is good for them, tho' they be *stiff* and *stubborn*? That so, what way or course in after-time their *Children* may take when they are from under their Power, the *Parents* may be clear of their *Children* in the day of their Account.

I say, my great Concern was many times, how I might *Train* up my *Children*, as did become the *Truth*, chiefly in what might be good for their *Souls*; relying upon God's Providence for other things, as he did see good. And as they came up in their tender years, one after another, in the fear of God, I laboured what in me lay, not only by *Advice* and *Counsel*, and timely Endeavours, to restrain the *wild* and *stubborn Nature*, and keep them out of and from every thing, that had an evil tendency in it; but also what in me lay, to beget *Love* in them to *Truth* and *Friends*, and one to another.

And

And ſo, as they grew up in years, did encourage them to go to *Meetings*: And I hope I may ſay without offence, my *Endeavours* (with the Bleſſing of God) hath wrought a good *Effect* in my *Children* to this day, I bleſs the Lord for it; and I never durſt put them forward to *play*, as ſome do; and when they had a Capacity, Educated them in Reading the Holy Scriptures and Friends Books: And always had and have a care to keep them out of the vain Faſhions of the World; neither could I ever ſuffer them to go to ſee or behold any *Sport*, *Game*, or *Paſtime*, or *Play*, that tends to nothing but ſtirring up of the vain, light Mind, and letting looſe the *wild Nature*, and corrupting of Youth. And it was my great Care and Concern, to be a *good Example*, before them, and unto them, according to the Counſel I had often given them. And hence it is, where this Care in Carriage and Behaviour in Parents before their Children is wanting, though ſuch Parents may profeſs the *Truth*, it tends to drive their *Children* farther from it, and hardens their Hearts, and ſo they grow *wild* and *wanton*, *proud* and *high-minded*; and as they get up, run to *Sports* (and *Plays*, and to *Drinking* and *Tippling*) amongſt the wild Rabble, as I have ſeen, to the grief of my Soul, in Towns and other places; and going to *Cock-fights* and *Bull-baitings*, and to ſtand amongſt wild rude People, ſpying a *Fool* and *Mountebank*, acting Folly and Madneſs upon a Stage or Rope; againſt which God's Anger at ſometimes by eminent Judgments hath been manifeſted.

Example. As for Example and Proof: At a certain time, when a Perſon had acted his *Folly* upon a *Rope*, *a Wall ſuddenly fell upon many people, ſome ſtruck dead and ſpoke no more, others their Backs and Legs broken, and others ſorely hurt and maimed, and bruiſed, that their blood came out at their Mouths.* Therefore let the remembrance of this dread all people, ſo as not to love or delight to behold Vanity, or ſuch like Folly and Madneſs.

The Godly Care of Parents in time, to train up their *Children* in the Fear of the Lord, and as becomes the Truth, ought to be diligently Exerciſed; for where that's wanting, theſe diſorders too often appear in their Children, that they grow up in *wildneſs* and *wantonneſs*, and in their *Behaviour* and *Apparel* to follow the bad ways, courſes and Antick *Faſhions* of the World. But who durſt do ſuch things in the beginning? And Truth is the ſame; though too many give to their Children, and take to themſelves that Liberty that they durſt not, nor would Truth ever allow of; though I know many neither can, nor do allow, nor give ſuch Liberty, neither to themſelves nor their Children; and bleſſed and happy are they that ſo diſcharge their Duty for that end, they may be clear in the diſcharge thereof, in the day and time of their Account; which they cannot be, that do to the contrary.

There

Therefore *Parents* and *Guardians* of Children, discharge your selves in your Duty to your Children, or those with whom you are concerned; and do not think to excuse your selves with saying, *There is great difference of Childrens Nature*: It's true there is; but your indulging of them, and Winking and Conniving at their running out into Vanity and Wildness, makes their Natures worse, and your Children more untruth like; and you are greatly in the blame.

How comes it to pass that so many Children of those that profess the Truth, are scarce come so far as to use the plain Language? What think you, that if you be Rich, and have great Portions for them, will this make them blessed and happy? And must they not therefore have their Wills crost? Consider, that they are Rich that God owns and loves, and Poor and Miserable that he rejects; and they are Rich that are Rich in Faith and Good Works towards him, notwithstanding Poor in this World. And the Prophet said, *If Riches increase, set not thy Heart upon them; for they will make themselves Wings and fly away.* *Psal.* 62. 10. *Prov.* 13.

So *Friends*, take Counsel, and be Advised in the Bowels of true Love by your *Friend*, that wisheth both *you* and your *Children* Happiness, both here and hereafter. And train up your *Children* in the Fear of the Lord in all things, as becomes the *Truth* you make *Profession* of: and withal, be sure you be a *Good Example* before them, and unto them.

And now *Children* be subject unto your *Parents* in that which is good, and none be Stubborn and Rebellious: For in the end, if you do, it will prove your own hurt and loss. And if any of your *Parents* shew forth any evil Example before you, take not Liberty thereby to do any thing that is evil, or to speak evil of Truth, nor to neglect Meetings; nor none to satisfie your selves with going to Meetings barely, because your *Parents* go, if you can but have Liberty to your Wills, and do and have what pleaseth you: This is not good for your Souls Health, though you want nothing for your Bodies; neither will it make for your Peace with the Lord, when you must be separated from all Worldly Enjoyments. *Eph.* 6. 1, 2, 3. *Col.* 3. 20.

So *Dear Children*, take my Counsel, and give ear to my Friendly and Tender Advice in true Love unto you: Let it be the Concern of your Minds chiefly in going to Meetings, with diligence to wait in the fear of the Lord, to feel the Work of his Power in your Hearts to change your Nature, and subject your Wills to do the Will of God, to the weaning of your Minds from delighting in *Sport* or *Pleasure*, or any *Game* or *Pastime*, or fine *Apparel*, or in Earthly *Substance*; that so thereby, *to wit*, by the Work of the Heavenly Power of God, your Hearts may be wrought into true tenderness and brokenness, and Minds and Spirits into Low-

lineſs,

lineſs and Humility before him; ſo will you feel *Love* to increaſe and abound in your Hearts towards *God*, his *Truth* and *People*; and ſo will you come, as you carefully mind the ſhinings of the pure *Light* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and Teaching of his Gracious Spirit, which will manifeſt all that which is evil in every Appearance of it unto you, and teach you to do that which is good in *Word* and *Action*. I ſay, this is the way for you to come out of *Childiſhneſs* and *Childiſh things*, and all manner of Diſobedience both towards *God* and your *Parents*, and to be weaned from all the *Vanities* and *Pleaſures*, *Cuſtoms* and *Faſhions* of the World; ſo that you will have no delight in keeping Company with any but ſuch as fear the Lord, which will greatly tend to your Happineſs and Proſperity, both in this Life and that which is to come, as that which teacheth you his Fear, is by you kept in; That ſo God alone may be Honoured and Glorified by you, and you may be a Comfort to your Parents; and the greateſt of all in the end will be your own. Unto which the Lord preſerve and keep you in his Fear in all Faithfulneſs, according to that Knowledge, more or leſs, that you have received from him, out of the Evil that is in the World, is the hearty Prayer, and Souls well-wiſhing of *your Friend*, both for *You*, and your *Parents*, as for my ſelf and my own Children, in diſcharge of my *Duty* in the Love of God. The Lord bring it home to your Underſtandings, *Amen*.

Given forth in my own Dwelling-Houſe in Cumberland, *the* 20*th day of the* 2*d Month*, 1692.

J. B.

Let this be Read in the Fear of the Lord, and with Underſtanding, in the Meetings and Families of Friends, whereſoever a Service may be ſeen for it.

THE END.